

The Glacial Heritage Area

Do you wish there were more opportunities close to home to enjoy the outdoors?

Do you like watching waterfowl and shorebirds during their spring and fall migrations?

Would you enjoy cross-country skiing, riding your bike or horse back riding on paths winding through the countryside?

Do you get a thrill hunting ducks on a cool October morning or wetting a line for bass?

Are you concerned about the growing disconnect between kids and the outdoors?



If your answer to any of these questions is "yes," then a new, community-based outdoor recreation and conservation effort, known as the Glacial Heritage Area, is intended for you.

What's proposed?

The Glacial Heritage Area (GHA) project would link parks, preserves, wildlife and natural areas, and other conservation lands to nearby cities and villages with different types of trails. This **network** aims to:

- **Connect people to the outdoors** – provide readily accessible opportunities for residents and visitors to get outdoors and participate in hiking, biking, wildlife watching, fishing, paddling, hunting, camping, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and other activities. The project also seeks to help keep kids connected to nature.
- **Protect the pearls** – protect and restore native grassland, savanna, woodland, and wetland habitats, and improve water quality in area lakes, wetlands, and rivers.



Carnes Park

Who's involved?

Some of the groups that have been most active in planning and designing the proposed GHA project are:

- Jefferson County Board
- Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium
- State Trails Council
- Rock River Coalition
- Jefferson County Tourism Council
- Pheasants Forever & local conservation clubs
- Jefferson County Bike Club & TREK Bicycle
- Natural Heritage Land Trust & Madison Audubon
- Land use experts from local planning firms
- Department of Natural Resources

Why here?

This area supports high quality grasslands, wetlands and forests interspersed with productive agricultural land. Together, this mix of conservation lands and farmlands provides a **unique opportunity to protect a landscape that harbors a wide variety of habitats, provides a wide range of outdoor, nature-based recreation, and sustains viable farming operations.**

The proposed Glacial Heritage Area project originates from the Wisconsin Land Legacy Report. The Report identified the most important places to meet conservation and recreation needs over the next fifty years. One of the highest priorities the public told the Department of Natural Resources during the development of the Legacy Report was to protect places **near where people live** that provide high quality outdoor recreation opportunities.

How would this happen?

The proposed project is intended to be a partnership involving many local groups, organizations, landowners, and levels of government. In particular, the partners involved in developing the proposal seek to **ensure that the GHA project meets the needs of local citizens** and provides residents and landowners with a variety of ways to be involved, should they so desire.

One option for landowners within the proposed GHA is to be part of the actual network. For example, some landowners may be interested in allowing a trail along the edge of their property. Others may be interested in selling or donating land to help create or expand parks, linking trails, wildlife areas, or other conservation areas. *Land would only be acquired from those landowners who wish to sell or donate land or land rights.*

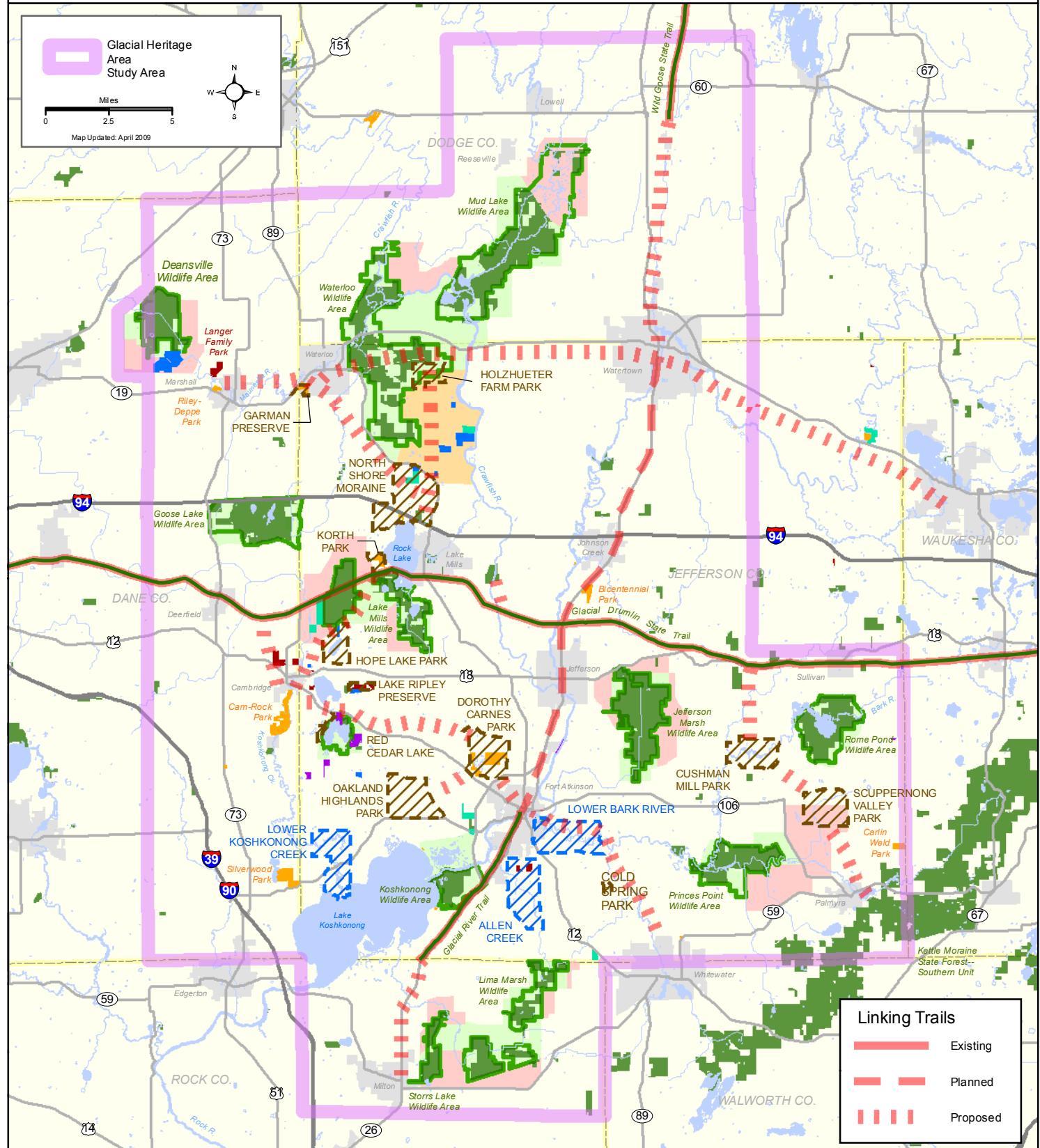
GLACIAL HERITAGE AREA

Proposed Plan

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Bureau of Land and Facilities



Existing Land Ownership

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Municipal | State (Non-DNR) | Non-profit Conservation Organization | Existing DNR Project Boundary |
| County | Federal | | |
| | | | Existing DNR Ownership Area |

Proposed Protection Areas

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Conservation Park | Proposed DNR Ownership Area | Proposed Crawfish Prairie Habitat Area |
| River Corridor | Proposed Rural Landscape Protection Area | |

What are the components of the proposed network?

Four types of places are proposed to make up the GHA network. Although the accompanying map shows the existing and proposed **conservation parks**, **linking trails**, **wildlife & natural areas**, and **river-based conservation areas**, other places could become important parts of the network, too.

Conservation Parks

The primary purpose of the conservation parks is to provide high-quality opportunities for residents and visitors to engage in a range of outdoor activities. In particular, the parks are intended to offer hiking, biking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing trails and associated facilities such as picnic areas and places to watch wildlife.

A total of ten parks and preserves currently exist in the area. The GHA plan proposes to expand five of these and to establish seven new parks to provide a broader range of outdoor experiences. Most of the conservation parks are proposed to eventually range in size from 200 to 700 acres.

Linking Trails

Approximately 100 miles of linking trails are proposed to meander through the countryside and connect the conservation areas to the nearby cities and villages. The linking trails would offer longer distance **biking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing** opportunities on relatively flat lands, either off-road or separated from vehicle traffic, and suitable for people with a range of abilities, including children and seniors. Most trails would be within narrow corridors (typically 30' to 100') with surfaces of packed gravel, asphalt, or grass. Some would have different "treads" for different trail users (for example, one path for bicycles, and an adjacent one for horses).

Acres currently owned, authorized for potential acquisition, and proposed to be purchased in the GHA project area by the DNR, counties, municipalities, or non-profit conservation groups.

	Currently owned or authorized for purchase	Proposed purchases
Conservation Parks	3,500 acres	3,801 acres
Linking Trails	300 acres	1,344 acres
River Corridors	400 acres	2,075 acres
Wildlife Areas	31,500 acres	20,800 acres
Total	35,700 acres	28,020 acres

Wildlife and Natural Areas

Eleven State Wildlife Areas and the Red Cedar Lake State Natural Area are present within the GHA Study Area and together encompass over 25,000 acres.

The GHA plan proposes to expand the eleven State Wildlife Areas to **protect and restore additional native habitats**, provide better public access and more recognizable boundaries, increase public hunting and trapping opportunities, and provide additional opportunities for rustic outdoor recreation.



Most of the proposed expansions of the Wildlife Areas would shift the existing project boundaries out to the nearest roadway.

The plan also proposes to establish one new property – the **Crawfish Prairie Habitat Area** – which would provide critically needed habitat for grassland birds

and other species. In addition, the plan proposes to buffer many of the Wildlife Areas with farming dominated areas, referred to as **Rural Landscape Protection Areas**. Finally, the plan proposes to expand the Red Cedar Lake State Natural Area.

River-based Conservation Areas

Two types of lands along rivers and creeks would be part of the GHA. First, is a set of small sites (5 to 10 acres), and potentially one or two larger sites, that would **provide access for boaters, paddlers, and shore anglers**. These areas might include parking, boat launches, picnic areas, pit toilets, and other simple facilities. The larger sites could provide rustic campsites accessible only from the water.

The second component would focus on natural resource protection: **high-quality wetlands and floodplain forests** along the Bark River, Koshkonong Creek, and Allen Creek. These areas harbor diverse native communities and populations of several rare plant and animal species.



What are the economic benefits?

If implemented, the GHA would help diversify the local economy and provide financial benefits on several fronts. One of the most obvious ways would be direct spending by residents and visitors. Research has shown that most people spend \$10 to \$40 or more per person per day on travel-related items (e.g., food, gas, bait, fees, equipment rental) regardless of whether they are biking, hunting, bird watching, hiking, paddling or participating in other nature-based activities. People who make overnight trips typically spend twice this amount. In addition, a considerable amount is spent on equipment purchases as well as visits to shops to buy items not directly related to outdoor recreation (e.g., antiques and gifts).

If just 2% to 4% of the projected future "participation days" in outdoor recreation in the region occur in the GHA project area, then an estimated \$50 to \$100 million annually would be generated in direct travel-related spending – much of which would be money coming into the area from visitors.

Another benefit would be to attract small to mid-sized businesses. A key factor that companies evaluate when looking at potential locations are quality-of-life amenities available for their employees, including facilities for outdoor recreation. As the composition of the job market in the region shifts over time, the Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium and local communities are looking to attract new businesses and view the GHA project as an important element in that effort.

What are the economic costs?

Implementing the Glacial Heritage Area project would require a significant financial investment. Based on existing values for the types of lands that would be part of the proposed GHA, the DNR estimates that **acquiring the proposed lands could cost perhaps \$125 million**. In addition, restoring habitat and constructing the **proposed facilities** (e.g., trails, parking lots, picnic areas, paddle access sites, etc.) is **estimated to potentially cost between \$12 and \$50 million**. These costs would be spread over **several decades** and be dependent on public-private partnerships and the availability of federal, state, county, local, and nonprofit funds, land-owner interest, and other factors. The majority of funding to implement the GHA project would likely come from the state Stewardship program.



Milwaukee Street Bridge, Jefferson

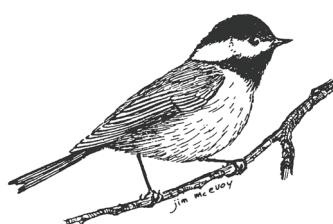
How does the project relate to existing land uses?

The GHA project is **designed to integrate with existing land uses** and complement local growth plans. Similarly, the partners helping develop the proposed project understand the importance and value of farming and advocate for ensuring a strong, vibrant agriculture community for the area. Not only does farming form a critical component of the local culture and econ-

omy, but the agricultural landscape provides the ideal setting within which to establish the network of parks and trails.

The GHA project seeks to ensure that the proposed recreation facilities and conservation lands have minimal impact to agricultural operations and are compatible with the various federal, state, county, and local efforts to maintain the area's farmland.

Most people spend \$10-\$40/person/day on travel related items when they go hiking, biking, hunting, bird watching, paddling, fishing, or participate in other nature-based activities.



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For more information about the GHA project, visit:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/facilities/glacial/index.html>

